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Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7542nd meeting

Friday, 23 October 2015, 10.45 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi	(Spain)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	Chad	Mr. Gombo
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Ambassador Raimonda Murmokaitė, Permanent Representative of Lithuania, in her capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014).

I now give the floor to Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed.

Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to thank the Council for this opportunity to brief it on the latest developments in Yemen. Our beloved Yemen is ablaze, and the Yemeni population finds itself in a catastrophic situation. The country is bleeding to death; its cities are collapsing; and its citizens have been deprived of their most basic rights in this conflict, which is both political and security-related.

This is not my first briefing to the Council; I had informed the Council previously that the Secretary-General had made extensive efforts in Geneva to make possible a rapprochement between the various parties to the conflict. Excellent ideas were heard, but they have not allowed us to put an end to the suffering of the Yemeni people. The parties to the conflict did not even meet face to face. Here it is important to note that the first talks took place more than five months ago.

Just last month, I informed the Council of my intention to convene consultations in the coming weeks. However, that initiative was cancelled, and additional preconditions were set. All of those missed opportunities only exacerbate the situation of the people of Yemen, whose future is today most uncertain.

I should like to reiterate what I said earlier to the Council: extremist groups are taking advantage of the situation. At the same time, the international community judged that the return of the legitimate Government to Aden augured well for the future. That Government was to bring peace and security back to the country, inter alia by restoring basic services for the people. Regrettably, things did not happen thus. Instead, extremist groups attacked Government headquarters in Aden, and many citizens were killed. Additional security measures will have to be taken to protect civilians. Also, a mosque in Sana'a was attacked, leading to the deaths of many worshipers during Eid prayers.

Today we know that in this country, where faith and religion are of vital importance and where various communities coexisted peacefully, extremism prevails and weapons circulate freely, which only helps extremists. Yemenis are therefore suffering deeply today. That people, known for their generosity, hospitality and strong values, are today caught up in a disastrous humanitarian situation. Civilians are paying the price of a serious political conflict. Many citizens have been displaced within their own country in a quest to find safe haven and the most basic necessities for survival.

The most recent report of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) indicates that the majority of Yemenis need humanitarian aid. Some 20 million Yemenis do not have access to safe drinking water. Hundreds of thousands — at least 500,000 — of Yemeni children are severely malnourished, which is one of the many consequences of this conflict.

Last month there was a wedding party which ended in a bloody fashion in the city of Taiz, while other cities have also been subjected to indiscriminate shelling. Taiz, the city that was once considered Yemen's cultural capital, has become a battlefront today. Its habitants are struggling to survive, night and day. Humanitarian aid, which is supposed to flow freely, is not reaching the people of Taiz, leading to grave shortages of medicines and other supplies. Large parts of the city have been left without safe drinking water, which poses a threat to the safety and health of the population.

The obstruction of commercial shipping continues to undermine the lives and livelihoods of Yemenis. Hospital services have been interrupted in many parts of the country and, according to OCHA, in September, there was a grave fuel crisis. Only 1 per cent of Yemen's normal monthly fuel requirements were allowed to

enter the Hodeidah region. We hope in the future to be able to help the Yemenis cope with this crisis.

We salute the efforts of all those who have sought to help the Yemeni people during this grave crisis, in particular humanitarian workers and the major organizations working in extremely difficult conditions. Moreover, we know that many humanitarian workers have lost their lives in that context. I salute them for their sacrifice.

The situation in Yemen is very serious, but I also want also to speak about certain elements of hope that suggest that there could be a better future for Yemen. I recently attended a forum organized by UN-Women in Larnaca, Cyprus, together with my office. Women from all over Yemen took part, which gave us an idea of the political diversity of the country. While the women differed in their views as to the reasons for the crisis, there was a genuine consensus on the importance of national political dialogue.

Women want to contribute to improving the humanitarian situation by helping humanitarian assistance reach its intended beneficiaries, particularly when it comes to food. They also want to help civilians deal with violence. The various parties to the conflict must return to the negotiating table to reach a peaceful solution. These women want to create an alliance for peace and security, and I will do all I can to help them by working with them and other women's and civil society groups to make their voices heard and thereby bring about an end to the crisis and a return to national dialogue.

When I last briefed the Council, I informed members of our intention to hold a meeting with the various parties to the conflict in Yemen. Sadly, that initiative did not come to fruition. Obviously, I have stayed in contact with the Houthis and the Yemeni Government in order to find a solution to the crisis. But thus far the two parties have reiterated their intention to abide by resolution 2216 (2015) and hand over their weapons.

I have recently made a tour of the Middle East where I met with leaders from Saudi Arabia, whom I briefed on the latest developments in the country and therefore on my discussions with the Houthis. In addition, at the margins of the General Assembly, I spoke with the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Mr. Abdul Latif bin Rashid Al Zayani, and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Oman. I held similar consultations in Russia with senior Government officials, including Mr. Mikhail Bogdanov, Mr. Putin's special envoy to North Africa and the Middle East, and other Russian representatives, who were all very supportive of our efforts to reach a peaceful political solution to the conflict in Yemen. I am very grateful for their support for my efforts.

I have also worked closely in recent weeks with Gulf Cooperation Council Secretary-General Mr. Al Zayani in order to bolster the conditions for national dialogue in Yemen. To that end, I continued discussions with the various parties in Yemen. Mr. Ban Ki-moon informed President Hadi Mansour of the Houthis' acceptance of resolution 2216 (2015). In a letter dated 19 October, President Mansour informed Mr. Ban of his intention to send a delegation to participate in peace talks in order to negotiate an end to the present conflict on the basis of the framework set forth by resolution 2216 (2015).

I am full of hope and I trust that face-to-face discussions — the first of their kind — will allow us to bring together the Government and the Houthis with a view to paving the way for peace in Yemen and open peaceful political dialogue and leading to a new transitional stage. My proposals have all be integrated into resolution 2216 (2015), and we will seek to work towards a withdrawal of militias from key cities, the release of prisoners, the return of heavy weapons seized from the army, improvements in the humanitarian situation and the resumption of inclusive political dialogue. This will allow us to push forward the various initiatives, especial the GCC Initiative.

All of this will mark a new milestone in the history of Yemen, and it is our desire that the Yemeni people have hope restored after all the suffering they have experienced in the crisis. All parties today are aware that there can be no military solution to the conflict and that only peace talks and dialogue will pave the road to a better future. However, this initiative needs the Council's support and protection. The various sides to the conflict remain divergent, and we count on the Council to help us to encourage the parties to move forward in order to put an end to the conflict and return their country to peace.

Finally, I wish to express my hope, gratitude and faith in the future. We have hope that the consultations and discussions between Yemenis will bear fruit. I also want to reiterate our gratitude to the Council for its

support. I trust that the Yemenis will in the end unite behind a common vision for the country, turn the page on war and look towards a brighter future.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Murmokaitė.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): Pursuant to paragraph 19 (e) of resolution 2140 (2014), I have the honour to report to the Security Council on the work of the Committee since my last briefing on 11 December 2014 (see S/PV.7336). This is my third report to the Council.

The adoption of resolution 2204 (2015), on the 24 February 2015, renewed until 26 February 2016 the assets freeze and travel ban measures imposed by paragraphs 11 and 15 of resolution 2140 (2014). The mandate of the Panel of Experts was also extended by the same resolution until 25 March 2016. On 14 April 2015, with the adoption of resolution 2216 (2015), the Security Council added Abdul Malik al-Houthi, the leader of the Houthi Ansar Allah Movement, and Ahmed Ali Abdullah Saleh, the son of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, to the sanctions list established and maintained by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014). The entry for Ahmed Ali Abdullah Saleh was updated with relevant bioidentifier information gathered by the Panel of Experts on 16 September 2015. By resolution 2216 (2015), a targeted arms embargo was imposed aimed at preventing the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer of arms and related materiel of all types to designated individuals, or for their benefit, or those acting on their behalf, or at their direction, in Yemen.

The designation criteria for listing were also expanded by resolution 2216 (2015) to include violations of the arms embargo and obstructing the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Yemen, or access to, or distribution of, humanitarian assistance in Yemen. Resolution 2216 (2015) broadened the mandate of the Panel of Experts to include monitoring the implementation of the arms embargo, and the Secretary-General was requested to increase the size of the Panel from four to five experts. Resolution 2204 (2015) called on all Member States to report to the Committee, within 90 days of the adoption of the resolution, on the steps they had taken with a view to implementing effectively the measures imposed by paragraphs 11 and 15 of resolution 2140 (2014). To date, 20 implementation reports from Member States have been received, and they are available on the Committee's website. Resolution 2216 (2015) requires Member States to submit an initial report to the Committee when it undertakes an inspection pursuant to the provisions of the targeted arms embargo, provided an explanation on the grounds for inspections and the results of such inspections is given, and if prohibited items for supply, sale or transfer are found, further required such Member states to submit to the Committee, within 30 days, a subsequent report containing relevant details and information not contained in the initial report. To date the Committee has received only one initial written report and no subsequent reports. I call on all Member States that have not done so to submit the required reports without delay.

On 29 July 2015, the Committee amended its guidelines to reflect the provisions contained in resolutions 2204 (2015) and 2216 (2015). The guidelines are available on the Committee's website.

In its work, the Committee continues to be assisted by its Panel of Experts. On 2 April, the Secretary-General appointed new members of the Panel following the extension of its mandate, pursuant to resolution 2204 (2015). A new arms expert was appointed on 18 June 2015. On 17 August, in view of the resignation of the regional expert, Mr. Ahmed Himmiche was appointed to serve as the regional expert of the Panel and assumed the functions of the coordinator of the Panel as of 31 August.

During the reporting period, the Committee met five times in informal consultations to hear presentations by the Panel of Experts on its final report (S/2015/125), a mid-term update and an update on financial and international humanitarian law aspects of its mandate. The Committee also met for a briefing by Mr. Amer Daoudi,Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Yemen Crisis, and joined informal consultations with the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict for a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Ms. Leila Zerrougui. Allow me now to go into some detail on the discussions held in the Committee.

On 2 February, the Committee discussed the final report to the Panel of Experts and subsequently agreed on the appropriate course of action regarding its recommendations. On 17 August, the Committee met to discuss the mid-term update of the Panel of Experts. On 25 August, Mr. Daoudi briefed the Committee on the

United Nations verification and inspection mechanism. Its purpose would be to ensure compliance with the provisions of resolution 2216 (2015) with regard to the targeted arms embargo and to help ensure access of commercial cargo to Yemen, which is essential for restoring the country's economy. Members of the Committee expressed their support for the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator's efforts and welcomed the imminent start-up of the mechanism.

On 18 September, Ms. Zerrougui briefed members of the Committee and the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict. She expressed deep concern over the escalating conflict in Yemen and its detrimental impact on the protection of children. Members of the Committee and of the Working Group strongly condemned ongoing violations and abuses against children in Yemen, and expressed deep concern over the impact of the deteriorating humanitarian situation on children. They also called for an end to all violations and abuses against children and agreed that the issue of the protection of children should be given continued attention.

Most recently, on 9 October, the Panel of Experts shared information with the Committee on international humanitarian law and finance aspects of its mandate. The members of the Panel noted that a continued investigations on the implementation of assets freeze, as well as on the attempt by some designated individuals to circumvent the effects of the targeted sanctions. They also underlined the need to take all the necessary steps to insure that the Panel had the ability to investigate all violations of international humanitarian law, including through access and travel to all parts of Yemen.

Members of the Committee reaffirmed their readiness to facilitate the implementation of the Panel's work and urged Member States to freeze assets of the designated individuals or entities, or by individuals or entities acting on their behalf, or at their direction, or by entities owned or controlled by them. The members of the Committee also stressed the need for all sides to comply with international humanitarian law, including to take all feasible precautions to minimize harm to civilians and civilian objects, and to end the recruitment and use of children in violation of applicable international law, and urgently work for the United Nations and humanitarian aid organizations to bring assistance to those in need throughout the country.

Before I conclude, I would like to draw attention to the efforts that have been undertaken to promote transparency in relation to the work of the Committee. An open briefing of the 2140 Committee was convened on 1 September 2015 to provide all States Members of the United Nations with an overview of the sanctions regime and the mandate of the Committee, and to provide an opportunity to ask questions. At that meeting, the Coordinator of the Panel of Experts briefed Member States on the mandate and activities of the Panel. Furthermore, the Committee engaged in dialogue with representatives of Yemen and the State members of the Cooperation Council of the Arab States of the Gulf. The Committee has also regularly issued press releases after significant discussions or decisions. I am also happy to note that all my reports to the Council have been presented in public meetings.

In conclusion, I would like to underline the importance of the full implementation by Member States of all sanctions measures imposed by resolutions 2140 (2015), 2204 (2015) and 2216 (2015), as well as of meeting their relevant reporting obligations. I would also like to encourage further cooperation with the Panel of Experts, including my providing it with the information and by facilitating its visits to Member States.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now invite members of the Council to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.